

## Stress: Medical troops advise Wolf Pack on how to fight real-world enemy

By Senior Airman Laura Holzer  
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Besides opposing forces, there is another dangerous enemy that will attack our troops during the Operational Readiness Inspection.

The nemesis affects every individual. It can prevent clear thinking and alter performance. The enemy is stress, and it's up to everyone to take action against it.

Stress is unavoidable, according to Staff Sgt. David Graf, 8th Medical Operations Support Squadron mental health technician. Everyone faces positive or negative stress every day, and with the upcoming inspection, it can be a deadly weapon against the Wolf Pack.

When one experiences stress, more than 1,000 chemical reactions occur in the body. Graf said the body soothes these reactions on its own. However, sometimes it doesn't happen immediately.

Graf said people recover from positive stress quicker than negative. Some examples of positive stress are compet-

itive running, planning a wedding or working on a personal project. But negative stress tends to linger, and it's up to the person with the negative stress to help ease it, he said.

"Negative stress is anything that brings feelings of anger, anxiety, worry, guilt or frustration," Graf said. "These feelings can stay with the person even after the stressor is gone."

With the upcoming inspection, Graf said people could experience negative stress factors.

"Anxiety and adrenaline levels are high because of the unpredictability of attacks. It can be physically and mentally demanding on a person," Graf said.

According to Graf, stress can make people smoke or drink more than usual, they tend to make more errors, don't perform as well, experience decreased energy levels, have a lack of enthusiasm and begin withdrawing from others.

"Someone who is stressed might feel fatigued and tired," he said. "He or she might have trouble sleeping, frequent

headaches or an upset stomach."

The stress management course instructor said there are several ways to relieve stress. One way is through exercise.

"When you're stressed, you feel tense," said Senior Airman Don Smith, 8th MDOS Health and Wellness Center medical technician. "Exercise helps you release tension and relax."

Smith said eating right, getting plenty of sleep and exercising regularly helps reduce stress.

"Even though the fitness center is closed during the exercise, most dormitories have a small gym," he said. "People can also perform jumping jacks, push-ups or sit-ups in their rooms."

However, clearing the day's events can be as easy by clearing a person's thoughts, according to Graf. He said daydreaming helps ease tensions.

"Close your eyes and think about where you would like to be," said Graf. "Try to make the vision as real as possible by involving all the senses – taste, touch, smell, sight and sound."

He also said listening to relaxing music, reading a book, watching television, playing video or board games and calling friends and family are ways to unwind.

On the other hand, when an Alarm Blue is announced, people don gas masks and take cover. In this situation where dreaming and exercising is not an option, releasing frustration is as easy as breathing. Graf said deep breathing from the diaphragm helps relax a person, even in a gas mask.

"By focusing on your breathing, you take in more oxygen and tend to calm down," he said. "Deep breaths should take a few seconds."

Above all, Graf said to remember relax and remember that everyone is experiencing similar stress.

"We are a team and need to take care of each other," he said.

"Some people vent their stress and fight with each other rather than fighting the enemy. That only hurts the team and the mission. Hopefully, everyone can find healthy ways to relieve stress and help others ease their discomfort."



### Warriorscopes



**Capricorn** (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) The upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection has you excited Capricorn, however, don't forget the Laws of Armed Conflict when "playing war." You cannot attack medical personnel or enemy personnel who surrender, or misuse a protected symbol, such as a red cross, crescent or Star of David to get an advantage on the opponent. Not only can these violations hurt the Wolf Pack in the inspection, but in a real-world wartime environment, you can be held accountable for your actions and be punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

For more information on LOAC see page 18 in the Airman's Manual or call the legal office at 782-4284.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) – Feeling down Aquarius? Well there's nothing like the Code of Conduct to spark the patriotism back into a warrior. Article VI says, "I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and the United States of America."

For more information on the Code of Conduct, see Page 2-2 in the January 2001 edition of the Kunsan's Ability to Survive and Operate Guide, or Page 2 in the Airman's Manual.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19 - March 20) – Pisces people usually have a good memory, so remind your co-workers to inspect their gas mask every six months during peacetime. Inspect every seven days during wartime. This includes exercises. Also, remind them to properly fill out the DD Form 1574, Mask Inspection Card.

For more information about the form, look on Page 7-3 in the ATSO Guide, or ask a member of the Exercise Evaluation Team.

**Aries** (March 21 - April 29) – Aries loves exercis-

es because they involve your best qualities – your love for action and challenges. Of course, exercises also highlight your two greatest faults – admitting failure and not taking other's advice. If you make a mistake Aries, it's okay. Learn and keep fighting. The inspectors also evaluate our attitude and how well we recover.

**Taurus** (April 30 - May 20) – Even though you're not on the base sweep teams, Taurus, it's everyone's responsibility to look out for unexploded ordnances after an attack. If you see one, look on Page 6-1 in the ATSO Guide for step-by-step instructions on what to do and what to report to the Unit Control Centers or Survival Recovery Center.

**Gemini** (May 21 - June 21) – Gemini, you love to be seen, but being in the spotlight can make you a target for enemy forces. Wear your reflective belt for safety reasons, but remember to black out windows. Cover shiny objects and lights on vehicles, but just enough to let light through, but not enough to be seen from a distance.

For more information about black out procedures, look on Page 46 in the Airman's Manual.

**Cancer** (June 22 - July 22) – Cancer is known to be sensitive. In fact, wearing your gas mask seems to ruin your sensitive skin. However, cleaning your gas mask with liquid soap will prevent that. Be sure to remove the hood and canister before you begin. While cleaning your mask, it's the perfect time to inspect it, too. Look on Page 7-1 in the ATSO Guide for a checklist of what to inspect.

**Leo** (July 23 - Aug. 22) – Leos tend to get restless and don't like to sit still, but you must stay put in an Alarm Black until the Battle Staff authorizes movement. Remember the three phases of Alarm Black,

Base Sweeps Only, Mission Critical Only and Shift Change. For more information about Alarm conditions, look on Page 5-5 in the ATSO Guide, page 67 in the Airman's Manual or call the 8th Civil Engineer Squadron readiness flight at 782-4849.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) – Since Virgo loves to be clean, you have no problem going to the Contamination Control Area after you find out you're in a contaminated area after a chemical attack. However, where do you go if you're contaminated and wounded? Wounded personnel must be processed through the hospital.

For more information about contamination procedures, review Chapter 8 in the ATSO Guide.

**Libra** (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23) – Libra, you are known to hate violence, but it's no excuse not to call in that suspicious character you saw on your way to work. Don't assume someone else will make the call. You may have seen something someone else didn't.

Give a SALUTE report to your UCC and you could deter violence in your area.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21) – Scorpio looks out for others, but remember to save yourself first if you start showing signs of being affected by nerve agent. Also, remember not to use your own nerve agent auto-injectors on someone else.

For more information about using auto-injectors, read Chapter 10 in the ATSO Guide.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) – Don't panic when you are chosen to perform self-aid and buddy care on your combat buddies. Chapter 11 in the ATSO Guide, and Page 111 in the Airman's Manual have information on different signs and treatment for injuries. If you are still uncertain, consider taking a refresher self-aid and buddy care class.